## Message Text

## CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 229140 ORIGIN EA-12

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P R 091837Z SEP 78 FM SECSTATE WASHDC TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY INFO SECDEF WASHDC 1224 CINCUNC COMUS/KOREA

CONFIDENTIAL STATE 229140

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, KS, KN, US

SUBJECT: MAULEX I-79

## CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

1. WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT MAULEX I-79 WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS PROVOCATIVE IF IT HAD TAKEN PLACE IN A MORE SOUTHERLY LOCATION ON THE PENINSULA, WE ACCEPT THE FACT THAT IT IS NOW TOO LATE FOR SUCH RELOCATION OF THE EXERCISE, AND HAVE WITHDRAWN OUR FORMAL OBJECTION. (WE FEEL STRONGLY, HOWEVER, THAT NEXT YEAR THE EXERCISE SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE POHANG AREA.) MAXIMUM CARE MUST BE EXERCISED THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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YEAR TO AVOID PROVOKING UNNECESSARILY THE NORTH KOREAN MILITARY AND PROVIDING INADVERTENT GRIST FOR THE NORTH KOREAN PROPAGANDA MILL. IN THIS CONNECTION PRESS HANDLING IS IMPORTANT.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT PRESS CAMPAIGN OF THE NATURE THAT ACCOMPANIED EXERCISE "TEAM SPIRIT" IS UNWARRANTED. ON THE

OTHER HAND, THERE WOULD APPEAR TO BE AN ADVANTAGE IN SHORT, FACTUAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SCHEDULED EXERCISE BEYOND SIMPLE NOTICE TO MARINERS. SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT HAS PRECEDENT IN THE "CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES" REQUIRING ANNOUNCEMENT OF MILITARY EXERCISES IN EUROPE, AS EFFECTED UNDER THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (CSCE). FURTHER, IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT HISTORICALLY KPA MILITARY REACTIONS TO PREVIOUSLY-ANNOUNCED EXERCISES (E.G., TEAM SPIRIT) HAVE BEEN SMALLER AND LESS SHRILL THAN FOR COMPARABLE UNANNOUNCED EXERCISES. WE WOULD WANT TO MONITOR CAREFULLY NORTH KOREA MEDIA REACTION TO SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

- 3. PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR REACTIONS TO THE IDEA OF A LOW KEY ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENT.
- 4. EXPERIENCE WITH THE SITING OF MAULEX AT KANGNUNG UNDERSCORES NECESSITY OF CAREFUL AND EARLY INTER-AGENCY REVIEW AND CLEARANCES ON ALL EXERCISES, ESPECIALLY WHEN CHANGES, SUCH AS MOVING MUCH CLOSER TO THE DMZ, ARE CONTEMPLATED. CHRISTOPHER

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